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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANTIAGO 000272

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TAGS: [SMIG](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [CI](#) [CU](#) [GUANTANAMO](#)

SUBJECT: CHILE REAFFIRMS WILLINGNESS TO RESETTLE CUBAN MIGRANTS

REF: SANTIAGO 219

Classified By: DCM ELYAMAUCHI FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d)

¶11. (C) SUMMARY. Chile reaffirmed its willingness to resettle up to 28 protected Cuban migrants currently at Guantanamo in a meeting today with visiting PRM Officer and Consul General, and will provide the migrants appropriate residence and work permits. The Chileans expect to be ready to interview migrants at GTMO by the end of February. The GOC prefers the transfer of migrants to be made quietly and without publicity. The Chileans asked that the USG provide financial support to the migrants for one year to assure their successful integration; the PRM Officer indicated a willingness to be flexible in addressing Chilean concerns. The GOC left open the possibility that additional Cuban migrants might be accepted for resettlement if the experience with this initial group is a positive one. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (C) Chile reaffirmed its willingness to resettle up to 28 protected Cuban migrants currently at the Guantanamo Naval Base during a meeting today with visiting PRM Senior Advisor Robert Gehring and Consul General. Ambassador Ricardo Concha, Director General for Consular Affairs, raised the possibility that Chile would be willing to receive additional Cuban migrants in the future, if the experience with this first group is a positive one. Carmen Gloria DeNegri, Chief of the Foreigner's Department, Ministry of the Interior, which is responsible for refugee and resettlement programs in Chile, also participated in the meeting.

¶13. (C) Discussion centered around Chilean concerns about the ability of the migrants to successfully resettle in Chile. The GOC emphasized that it limits its responsibility to offering resettlement and providing documentation for the migrants to reside and work in Chile, it does not assume responsibility for the financial costs or logistics of resettlement. The Chileans expressed concern that some migrants might not become self-sufficient within the six month period of resettlement support offered by the USG, and that living costs would exceed the proposed total financial assistance of \$3,000 per migrant, distributed in monthly installments. While no final time frame or figure was agreed upon, Gehring indicated flexibility and a willingness to consider providing support for up to one year. He also noted that in other resettlement countries, the International Organization for Migration and a local NGO often managed the logistics of resettlement and the distribution of the monthly stipend to the migrants. The Chileans noted the existence of a Cuban community in Santiago, numbering about 3,000, that would be likely to help out.

¶14. (C) The Chileans were prepared to move quickly. They wish to interview migrants and will inform the Embassy when a delegation of two or three Ministry of Interior officials is ready to visit GTMO. They hope the visit will take place in late February or early March at the latest. The GOC also wishes to exchange diplomatic notes confirming the terms under which it will accept these migrants.

¶15. (C) Ms. DeNegri said that Chile will provide migrants one year temporary residence and the national ID card (RUT) necessary to obtain work and many other services. Migrants would have access to any government services available to Chileans, such as schools for minor children and basic health care. After the initial year, migrants may apply for permanent residence, and after five, citizenship. The GOC recognizes its responsibility not to return the migrants to Cuba.

¶16. (C) The Chileans indicated that they did not want to publicize the resettlement.

¶17. (C) Gehring told the Chileans that the State Department would be willing to consider proposals for assistance for refugee program capacity building in Chile through one of its partners, such as IOM or UNHCR. He also said the Department would also be willing to consider an international visitor grant for Chilean refugee officials to learn about US refugee resettlement programs.

¶18. (C) In response to a question from the Consul General, Ambassador Concha and Ms. DeNegri confirmed that the upcoming

inauguration of a new government in Chile should not affect Chile's willingness to accept these migrants.

19. (C) COMMENT. Post will follow-up with the MFA to ensure that the momentum developed in today's meeting is not lost. We will advise the Department of the proposed dates of the Chilean visit to GTMO as soon as they are available. END COMMENT.

KELLY